



# PHILIPPINES

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**Working Group on the Strengthening of the Convention on the  
Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of  
Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction  
(BWC)  
7-18 August 2023**

Presentation of the ASEAN Working Paper entitled “ASEAN Member States’  
Perspective on International Cooperation and Assistance Under the  
Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and  
Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their  
Destruction (BWC)

*Delivered by Ms. Kristine Leilani R. Salle, Chargé d'affaires, a.i.,  
Minister and Deputy Permanent Representative,  
Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the  
United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva*

Mister Chair,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own country, the Philippines.

We wish to congratulate you for your election as Chair of the Working Group and express full support for your work and those of the Friends of the Chair.

We reaffirm our commitment to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC).

This commitment is an important component of their vision for a rules-based, people-oriented, and people-centered ASEAN Political-Security Community or APSC. This vision is reflected in their continued commitment to enhancing regional capacity to address chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear, or CBRN, threats through relevant ASEAN-led mechanisms.

In their Joint Communiqué issued on 12 July 2023, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of ASEAN Member States affirmed their support for the BWC and recognized the necessity of multilateral negotiations and noted the lack of a verification measure, the latter of which poses a challenge to the effectiveness of the Convention. They also placed great importance on enhancing international cooperation, assistance, and exchanges in toxins, biological agents, equipment, and technology for peaceful purposes.

The States Parties to the Convention have demonstrated a consensual understanding that fostering cooperation is vital for the implementation of the Convention at the national level. New initiatives for improving international cooperation in the use of biological sciences and technology for peaceful purposes have been appreciated at the Ninth Review Conference, in order to supplement the already existing mechanisms. ASEAN Member States believe that the achievements of the Ninth Review Conference provide a useful starting point to strengthen the effectiveness and to improve the implementation of the Convention in all its aspects, including through the work of the Working Group on the Strengthening of the Convention.

In this context, ASEAN Member States submitted a working paper on their perspectives on international cooperation and assistance under Article X of the BWC as a substantive contribution for this Working Group. The first part of the working paper pertains to international cooperation and assistance among ASEAN Member States and among States Parties to the Convention.

Mister Chair,

ASEAN Member States recognize that cooperative activities in the Southeast Asian region are part of the broader international cooperation and assistance that are being conducted by and among States Parties to the Convention through various means.

Within the Southeast Asian region, ASEAN Member States implement their commitments to international cooperation and assistance through various means, in accordance with their respective national laws and regulations, including, inter alia, the following notable examples:

- Within the purview of the Network of ASEAN Chemical, Biological and Radiological (CBR) Defense Experts, ASEAN CBR Defense Experts meet and share information and best practices through regular exchange of visits, workshops, and virtual table-top exercises in order to strengthen regional preparedness and cooperation against chemical, biological, and radiological threats.
- Practical cooperation in the ASEAN defense sector has continued to make good progress since its inception in 2006, particularly through the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) platform. The ADMM-Plus Chemical, Biological and Radiological (CBR) Conference was organized in Singapore from 11-12 October 2022 to develop a deeper understanding of the risks posed by CBR agents in terrorist acts in the region through the sharing of information and best practices, to enhance cooperation and preparedness against CBR threats, and to establish closer networks between regional and international CBR experts.
- ASEAN Member States, through the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), continue to conduct workshops focusing on bio-threat reduction, bio-risk management, disease surveillance, detection, preparedness, and response. This includes the successful ARF Table-Top Exercises on Response Capabilities to CBRN Incidents held in Manila on 13-15 June 2022.
- ASEAN Member States continue to pursue efforts to identify CBRN risk mitigation needs, develop National CBRN Action Plans, and formulate and implement regional project proposals through the assistance of the CBRN Centre of Excellence (COE) for Southeast Asia based in Manila, which also cooperates closely with the Network of ASEAN CBR Defense Experts. The achievements of Southeast Asian partner countries, including their cooperation on national and

intra-regional capacity-building, have been recognized as success stories in the context of international cooperation and assistance.

- ASEAN Member States also continue to strengthen cooperation in their efforts in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including biological weapons, particularly through the U.N. Security Council 1540 Workshop for ASEAN Member States co-hosted by Thailand and the U.N. Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) in Bangkok on 21-22 September 2022.

Mister Chair,

ASEAN Member States also note the contribution of the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) and other relevant international organizations, as well as scientific and academic institutions and non-governmental organizations, to fostering international cooperation and assistance under the Convention.

The second part of the working paper pertains to a mechanism to promote international cooperation and assistance. We will present this portion when we take up this subject on Thursday.

I thank you, Mister Chair.